THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) No. According to the Independent Monitor report published in February 2005 there is no evidence that single men or women were especially targeted for refusal of UK visa.

(b) The report has confirmed that the overall rate of UK visa refusals has gone up from 6.5% in 2000 to 15.4% in 2003-04 for all types of applications.

(c) Government of India has been taking up with the UK Government from time to time visa issues affecting Indian nationals.

Cancellation of TEAM-9 Summit

383. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a summit meeting of TEAM-9 in West Africa was scheduled to be held in Senegal in May this year;

(b) whether this meeting was cancelled suddenly; and

(c) if so, the reasons for this cancellation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) No, Sir. It was proposed to have only a Ministerial meeting of TEAM-9 countries in Senegal in May 2005.

(b) and (c) The meeting could not be held as convenient dates for the assembly of all Ministers in Senegal in May 2005 could not be organised. The meeting was subsequently held on 3rd July, 2005 in Sirte, Libya.

New visa procedure for students visiting Australia

384. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Australian High Commission in Delhi has evolved a new visa procedure for students wishing to study in Australia;